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VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE PROGRAM

IN

A. J. Moore High School, Waco, Texas

By

Timmoxena Furlow Arnold

PRairie View State College

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A Thesis in Education Submitted
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
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in the

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Vocational Guidance Program In

A. J. Moore High School__Waco, Texas

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Introduction

Recognition of the Vocational objective of the high school implies an obligation for vocational guidance. The need for guidance relative to vocational subjects is as great as the need for guidance relative to the subjects not having direct vocational objectives. In fact the need probably is greater. But vocational guidance is not confined to securing efficient adjustment between the students and the Vocational subjects of the curriculum. It looks forward to the time when the student will engage in some vocational activity, and it endeavors to guide him so that there will be a minimum of maladjustment in his vocational life.

American democratic ideals demand not only that all should have as nearly as possible equal opportunity for education, but also that all men and women should be employed in that form of work by which they may contribute most of their own happiness and to the common good. Hence if the high school is to prepare its students to be vocationally efficient, there is need for guiding them so that they will be equipped to make the optimum readjustments in this complex world of economic and social changes.

Waco

Waco, the largest city on the Brazos River, is located in South Central Texas, McLennan County. The Brazos River is the longest and largest river in Texas over which is the longest and highest highway bridge in the South West. It has four railroads and seven highways. Waco also lies in the center of a great agricultural, live stock, and poultry region, thereby making it the Mecca for the trade of these farm products. It has a city area of 17.5 square miles and a county area of 1049 square miles.

The estimated 1936 population of the city is 66,385, of this number 9,370 are Negroes. There has been a decided increase in city population since 1930, due to jobs being created by the P. W. A. and other such organizations. In the surrounding communities the growing and the harvesting of cotton have given a number of workers employment, the majority of which have been Negroes and Mexicans. For this type of labor a bare living wage is paid.

The A. J. Moore High School is located in the southeastern part of the city in the center of a large population of Negroes. The teacher personnel of the school is composed of fourteen teachers and the student enrollment is about six hundred and fifty. The grades taught are from

eighth through the eleventh. Mathematics, English, natural science, social science, and foreign language are the literary subjects offered. The vocational subjects are home economics, manual training and commercial. Music is the one subject among fine arts that's offered.

Explanation of Term

Guidance is the help given a child to enable him to find himself, develop his outstanding talent or the work he is best fitted to follow at an early age, thereby eliminating waste of time, energy, and money. The ideal goal of educational guidance is to have every student pursue a program of studies compatible with his capacity to learn, his interests, his previous experiences, and his vocational expectation. There is, of course, the added requirement that the program of studies be compatible with the objectives of the secondary school. In other words, the studies pursued should form a well balanced course.

Origin

Since vocation plays such a conspicuous and measurable part in life activities, it is quite natural that organized efforts at guidance should start in the vocational field. Social, civic, avocational, and other types of guidance may not be less important, but they are less tangible. The easiest approach to the principles of guidance then is through an analysis of the steps in Voca-

tional guidance.

Consciousness of the value of vocational selection is by no means confined to recent decades. Plato considered the subject in his Republic. An elaborate Vocational guidance book was published by T. Waller in 1747. The phrenologists gave excellent analyses of the requirements of the various occupations in the early years of the nineteenth century and attempted to aid young people in vocational choices by analyzing their cranial qualities. During the late middle age and early in the modern period the guilds exercised a selective influence, and always the system of apprenticeship has served as a trial-and-error method of guidance. (The present movement of vocational guidance may be said to have begun with the work of Frank Parsons in the North End Settlement in Boston in 1907. At that date the Vocation Bureau was organized to facilitate his work. In 1909, his "Choosing a Vocation" appeared and laid the foundation of a voluminous literature dealing with every phase of the subject. Mr. Parson's work was continued and enlarged by Meyer Bloomfield, whose various books have had a wide influence.

Growth

From the Boston Vocation Bureau the work of vocational guidance extended into the Boston Public Schools. It was at first voluntary, but later a central vocational office

was established to coordinate the work. In Brooklyn and New York the High School Teachers' Association took up the problem of Vocational Guidance shortly after its beginning in Boston. The idea spread so rapidly that within a few years Grand Rapids, Cincinnati, Chicago, Buffalo, Los Angeles, Rochester, Milwaukee, Philadelphia, and many smaller cities organized some sort of agency for Vocational advice. By 1916 there were one hundred and fifty high schools listed in the Bulletin of the National Vocational Guidance Association which claimed to have made beginnings in organized guidance, and two years later there were nine hundred.

The first conference on vocational guidance met in Boston, in 1910, a second conference of leaders met in New York, in 1912, and the National Vocational Guidance Association was organized at a similar meeting in Grand Rapids in 1913. Since that time there has been an Annual Conference, and the Association has done much to stimulate interest in the general problem, to spread literature concerning Vocational Guidance, and to encourage schools to establish courses for training guidance experts. The first organized course offered in a university was given in the Harvard Summer School of 1911. Since that date courses have become so popular that they are now available in practically all of the larger teacher-training schools of the country. The Vocational Guidance Maga-

zine was established in 1911 and has served as a publishing medium since that date.

Purpose

It seems clear that there are two aims in modern movement for vocational guidance, in the first place, each of the boys and girls now in school, destined as they are to earn their living in adult society, must be given an opportunity to discover those forms of occupational effort by which they can render goods and services to other people and so achieve their own success; in the second place, every citizen must be guided to cooperate in helping to solve those larger problems of occupational life, national and international, which can not be solved by an individual alone, and which frequently require legislative action on the part of government.

Need

The underlying philosophy of the guidance movement rests in the attempt to meet the needs, capacities and interests of pupils at an early period and provide for proper differentiation of activities to foster the most effective development of the individual's powers. It also grants that there is marked variety in inborn gifts; that the greatest happiness and the highest efficiency result from exercise of native talents. To give each of the members of the A. J. Moore High School an opportunity to find himself, the guidance movement was begun September,

1926. The general term "guidance" is used, although the work is largely confined to educational and vocational guidance.

The ultimate aims of the guidance program are to provide an educational and vocational service adapted to the needs of its pupils, and to enrich the school's service through an adequate articulation with home and community. It hopes to do this by studying, and as far as possible, understanding the individual; by providing adequate classification of pupils with respect to subjects and activities; by promoting the life career motive so that all will be exceedingly interested; by cooperating with the home to secure normal home contacts which will result in better preparation of school work and more careful attention given to the health of the children; by providing counseling both educational and occupational and follow-up for pupils in the schools by helping those graduates who are pursuing higher courses and those who are seeking occupational adjustments and readjustments; by providing a more complete cooperation with those agencies in the community which can contribute to the development of our guidance service; by providing information and an explanation of leisure time activities and by stimulating self guidance.

Guidance services on the part of the secondary school are rendered necessary by at least four conditions: The

character of the demands for modern secondary education; the changes in the social and economic order to which the secondary school pupil must adjust himself; the needs of the adolescent for counsel and guidance; and the necessity of avoiding waste in process of education.

The secondary school of a generation ago had a narrow curriculum, designed chiefly to prepare young people for college. The decision to send or not to send a youth to high school was at that time usually made by the family. The individual who presented himself for admission to a secondary school generally knew what he was seeking. After admission the individual was primarily responsible for his own failure or success. He knew in advance the nature of the opportunities offered by the school and successful accomplishment on his part was assumed. If he failed to meet the requirements of the school, he either tried again or voluntarily withdrew. It was taken for granted by the individual that the family sacrifice should not be made in vain and that the secondary school was not maintained for those who could not profit from the academic opportunities provided.

Today the situation is greatly changed. There is enforced a compulsory education law and the public sentiment for secondary education is so strong that virtually all children under eighteen years of age are enrolled in the

secondary school, as a result the school has had to make marked changes in organization in an attempt to meet the needs of its varied personnel. Instead of a required curriculum designed to prepare chiefly for admission to college, curriculums are now offered from which the pupils may select. The increase in course offerings represents an effort on the part of the secondary schools to meet the various needs of their pupil personnel.

The adjustment of pupils of high-school age to the complex world in which they live is no simple matter. The individual's world today is vastly larger and more complex than it was a generation ago. Important changes in the social and economic structure render both social and vocational adjustments difficult. The rapid shifting of population from rural to urban life has complicated the processes of social and economic adjustment. As a result, the individual at the threshold of his entrance into college or industry and adult community life is frequently overwhelmed by experiences which he does not fully understand and can not clearly interpret. Since the home is usually unable to provide the guidance needed in the interpretation of many experiences encountered by the youth the secondary school is compelled to assume a portion of the function formerly discharged by the home. If

the school fails to assume this function, the individual is apt to flounder for want of guidance and may fail to find himself with respect to his interests and capacity or to take full advantage of the opportunities offered in school and society for his growth and development.

Methods

The activities of this department are administered through classes in occupations, individual counseling, home-room activities, vocational clubs, assemblies, trips, pageants, plays, and placement.

Personal contact on an individual basis is perhaps the means by which we render our best services to pupils. The individual interview is an important phase of our program. It is held in order to determine the individual's immediate plans for further education; to study his social and economic background as an indication of the probable length of his stay in school; or to learn of the kind of work he plans to do if he expects to leave school. A study is made of the chronological age, intelligence, and scholarship of each pupil that we may recommend the prevocational school to those cases who would profit by that type of training. A study of class analysis charts and report cards is carried on with a view toward prevention of failure and toward further adjustments of certain children. They are also interviewed to make sure that each pupil is taking his next step intelligently,

whether it be to another school or into employment.

Interview with parents at home or in school are also effected in cases of contemplated courses to be pursued. Either by letter or at Parents' Meetings the parents are informed of the choices of subjects which the children are offered. This makes it possible for them to assist their children more intelligently in the choice of the various educational opportunities. At home contact with the home is an essential element of the guidance program, for both the home and the school need to supplement each other for the benefit of the child.

Vocational Conference with leading men and women from the various professions and lines of business in Waco exerts a fine influence in our educational and vocational guidance program. The Service Clubs have been of great assistance in furnishing speakers, and the first hand information which they give has proved most valuable to our girls and boys. These conferences take the form of round table discussion where pupils interested in hearing of a given piece of work are afforded that opportunity. Whenever possible, parents are invited to these conferences so that they may have the benefit of this type of information.

In order to insure greatest returns to the pupils from the discussion, each speaker is asked in discussing his own vocation to enlighten pupils on such points as: importance of the vocation to society, advantages and

disadvantages, preparations necessary to enter the occupation, other qualifications or requirements necessary for success, initial income and chance for advancement, and the effect of the occupation on the life of the worker. After the conferences, in order to test the information obtained, either a written or oral report is made in the class in occupations.

Another means of supplementing the regular work in class occupations is the Vocation Club, the aim of which are similar to those of the class in occupations. The club has proved especially successful in its trips to industrial and business establishments as well as to educational institutions. Since the club is constituted only of a representative group of pupils, the information gained through trips is often brought to the other students of the school by means of short talks given by club members during class periods.

Pageants and plays have proved effective means of presenting educational and vocational information. They provide an activity to which parents may be invited to great advantage.

There is no organized placement bureau established, but the placement of students is carried on through the principal and vocation teachers. The boys are able to secure employment in printing establishments, electrical shops, in the construction of buildings, and sign painters.

The girls have been placed in dressmaking shops, delicatessen shops, and in business places as stenographers.

Results

One of the outstanding features of the results of the guidance program was the construction of a public address system by the students of the school. Some of the boys became interested in electrical engineering. That course was not offered only in a primitive way in the building of radio sets, however, these pupils, with help of literature and instructions of the manual training teacher, progressed at an amazingly rapid rate. They became able to repair minor electrical irregularities occurring in the school.

The cabinets for this public address system was constructed by some of the advanced students in the manual training department. One of the boys, after finishing high school continued the study of electrical engineering in a creditable institution. The high school boys, with the aid of this young man, did the wiring. This project gives perfect service at a minimum cost. Should any irregularities occur in this piece of electrical mechanism they are able to make the necessary adjustments.

The effectiveness of the guidance program is evident in the retention and increase of pupils in school, additional subjects, both literary and vocational, increase in the teacher staff and the employment of stu-

dents not able to go to college. It has help to determine the courses to be pursued by those who do attend college.

Conclusion

In a general sense all education is guidance and there is probably no word in education whose significance is greater. It may be truly said that guidance is the major care of parenthood, education, and religion. Throughout infancy, childhood and youth, as well as after maturity has been reached, the fundamental need of every individual, now as through the ages is guidance. Indeed a central function of the greatest institutions that have come through civilization the home, the church, the school, law, and order, is and always has been the hope of better guidance of each oncoming generation.

Now we have been concerned with a more limited meaning of the word. We have considered particularly what part the school can play in the guidance of youth, and what should be the nature of that guidance. The commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education holds that vocational guidance is an essential function of the secondary school. Unless plans for such guidance are thoroughly incorporated and continuously exercised, the efforts of the school in behalf of the youth in its charge will be largely misdirected.

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